



Niagara River Greenway

NEWSFLASH

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The Niagara River Greenway has been hard at work lately; we are setting up community environmental groups, advising trail adopters of the Shoreline Trail, supporting clean-ups, bike rides, and walks, and working to engage students in different outdoor activities and programs.

Grand Island Nature Alliance

The Grand Island Nature Alliance is a group we have formed with Grand Island community members in the forefront. The group has planned outdoor education events, such as the Monarchs and Milkweed event, a Tree Identification Walk, and a Foraging Walk, all promoting community members to get outside. A demonstration pollinator garden has also been installed between the West River Shoreline Trail and road, which will showcase the beauty of native flowers. The alliance is made up of and run by community members who share a passion to protect the outdoors and hope to inspire others to do so, as well.

Our hope and vision for this group is to create a greater appreciation for all the great natural assets Grand Island has to offer. This will be done by bringing people outdoors and offering environmentally themed education events. The long term goal is for people to want to preserve and restore land through potential conservation easements or community restoration projects.

Adopt-A-Trail Groups

Adopt a Trail is a program that gives local clubs, organizations and businesses the opportunity to adopt a portion of the Shoreline Trail to help improve the trail for community use and enjoyment. Acting as ambassadors of their trail segment, adopters are encouraged to communicate with trail users to identify the needs and desires of the community; hold trail cleanups a few times a year; and add trail amenities that enhance the trail users' experience. Niagara River Greenway works with the land owners and municipalities to help coordinate clean ups and any projects adopters wish to complete along their segment of the trail.

In the last few months, trail adopters have been quite busy. The Buffalo Sunrise Rotary Club has hosted two separate clean ups, working to remove trash, as well as branches from their section of the trail. They even involved Nichols school kids in the process, to gain even greater traction in their efforts. Kenmore West, NOCO Energy Corporation, and Grand Island Rotary have also had their own clean ups of the Shoreline Trail, with KenTon getting almost 40 kids involved. Buffalo Rotary took a different turn and decided to not only clean up trash, but remove the invasive Buckthorn species from the Shoreline Trail. Zachary Goodrich, a Preserve Steward, from Tifft Nature Preserve demonstrated removal techniques and led a group in the effort. The Niagara River Greenway also interviewed and recorded Goodrich's process, in order to create a 10 minute video tutorial about invasive removal. This will be distributed out to Adopt-A-Trail groups, along with a handbook outlining how to set up successful clean ups and vendor amenity resources that enhance the trail users' experience.



School Engagement

The Niagara River Greenway has been supporting programs in and out of the classroom for school groups. The Maple Avenue School in Niagara Falls has been partnering with NRG to put on educational, yet fun, outdoor activities. In September, over 130 students took a bike ride exploring the Shoreline Trail, riding from Whirlpool State Park to the Fort Gray overlook. Most recently, the partnership allowed over 180 students to enjoy a Fall Halloween Candlelight Hike through the Old Growth Forest in the Deveaux Woods Trail System. Students learned about the history of DeVeaux Woods, the Old Growth Forest, and the grave of Eliza Keig.

The Niagara River Greenway has also recently presented in the Grand Island school system, Riverside Academy, and Kenmore West High School. The students have learned about our mission and the ecology of Western New York, been briefed prior to school-wide clean up days, and been introduced to our second annual Environmental Summit.

This summit is geared towards select groups of teachers and high school students in Kenmore, Tonawanda, North Tonawanda, Grand Island and North Buffalo, where motivated students will extend their knowledge about local environmental issues, as well as become familiar with the organizations dedicated to mitigating them. They will propose a project that works to improve their community from a beautification or environmental standpoint. NRG will give them funding to complete this project in the spring and in February, the students will present their ideas at our Environmental Ambassador Summit to be held at Linde Inc., to both judges and their peers. They will also learn from keynote speakers, get the opportunity to engage with multiple environmentally focused organizations, and speak with local colleges and universities about their environmental science & studies programs. We work to not only teach the students in the classroom, but also give them the opportunity to get out into the environment and learn in a hands-on manner.



We hope to continue to encourage community and school groups to develop healthy activities on the Greenway and through our HighMark Grant, sponsor programs to help grassroots groups get started in an effort to promote active outdoor recreation on the parks and trails of Western New York.